

Worship Defeats Poverty

By Dave Roberson

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture notations are taken from the *King James Version* of the Bible.

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Chapter 1

Deception Imprisons People

Worship plays more of a role in a believer's ability to live in God's prosperity than most Christians have been taught. The truth is, the devil uses deception to keep many believers in the dark about the steps they could take in their relationship with God that would change their entire lives. One of the most important of these steps is learning how to enter into true worship.

Three Strategies of Deception

Before we talk about the role of worship in defeating poverty, I want to discuss some of the reasons so many Christians aren't enjoying the prosperity that is rightfully theirs in Christ. The primary reason lies in the devil's strategies to deceive.

Satan uses three main areas of deception to imprison people in poverty and lack. First, he uses a sense of unworthiness to make people feel guilty for being alive, much less worthy enough to be thrown even a morsel of prosperity. This tactic is possible when Christians don't understand righteousness. In their ignorance, they are prime candidates for self-condemnation, a favorite tool of the enemy.

Second, the devil allows people to understand the power in money. The desire to attain this power keeps many Christians from ever taking the necessary steps to learn the relationship between God and money or what is really required of them as

believers in the area of finances.

Third, the devil blinds believers who have a natural ability to make money (or who have inherited money) to the negative effects money can have on them. You see, just because a person has money doesn't automatically make him immune to Satan's devices. In fact, he is often even more vulnerable to the enemy's deception than the believer whose resources are limited.

From God's Perspective

We need to understand that God does not look at this area of finances the same way we do. We may be rolling in money, but as long as that money is not being used to increase God's Kingdom, it does not impress Him one little bit.

In fact, we cannot assume it is God's provision every time we receive an increase in our finances. Satan knows that, although many things will challenge our loyalty to God, nothing does it quite so severely as the love of money. Therefore, he isn't opposed to money coming our way if it improves his chances of drawing us into the snare of his deception.

Sometimes the only thing constraining a person from yielding to the temptations of the world is that he cannot afford to do so. But once the financial restraint is removed, the depth of the person's commitment to God is revealed.

You see, most Christians want to serve God to some extent. Unfortunately, many times their commitment to God is only deep enough to survive as long as

something they perceive to be better doesn't come along — something like **MONEY!**

Missionaries returning from third-world countries cannot help but look upon Christians in America with a certain amount of disdain when they see the cars, houses, and large incomes that many American believers possess. In the natural, it's difficult to blame these missionaries. On the mission field, they see mothers walk for miles with their children in order to attend a church service and then stand for hours praising God. After the service, the women walk the long distance home, give their children a small bowl of rice for the day, and put them to bed.

Later these same missionaries return home to the United States and encounter believers who use every excuse in the book to explain why they can't make it to church. And even when these American Christians do make it to church, their most difficult decision is often which car they will use that day!

So we see that the devil is busy concocting strategies to deceive people and to keep them from viewing money the way God does. To a large extent, the enemy has been successful in his strategies. Believers face a difficult choice when it comes to this area of finances, and too often they make the wrong one!

Chapter 2

The Choice

Satan is a dictator. He would send the entire human race to hell if it were up to him. He hates human beings and delights in reducing civilization to a subhuman standard — starving children to death and causing adults to worship animals and images made like corruptible men and four-footed beasts.

Choosing Between Two ‘Gods’

When people are reduced to a pitiful state of despair, they look for a way out. In their despair, they take hold of anyone’s hand who will offer them a ray of hope. People like this will literally throw themselves on God with an intensity that reflects their despair. They don’t have fifty other options from which to choose. However, many times their loyalty lasts only as long as the crisis they are trying to get through.

When anyone in this condition suddenly receives prosperity, an interesting thing occurs. All of a sudden, they have two “gods” or “masters” to choose from.

One “god” is named “mammon” or “money.” This “master” is willing to serve their whims, their greed, and their lusts. On the other hand, their Father God (the other “Master”) is only willing to serve righteousness, holiness, and peace. That’s why Jesus said,

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and

despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Matthew 6:24

This defines an essential problem within the American church. The United States is a mighty nation, but God cannot use it to its fullest potential. Why? Because many of the same Christians who remain loyal during times of persecution and hardship choose to fall away during times of prosperity when the gods of mammon and greed begin to test their loyalty.

For instance, I used to wonder why there aren’t as many creative Christian songwriters as there are in the world. Then I realized that the Body of Christ includes many creative Christian artists. However, many times when these artists find out they possess a marketable commodity, they sell out to the highest bidder — and that’s usually the world.

The Church’s Dilemma

What is the result of so many American believers failing the test of loyalty between God and mammon? It makes it appear as if Christians of third-world countries are more dedicated and loyal to God in the midst of adversity and hardship than are Christians in America where one’s faith or walk with God is seldom significantly challenged.

To the natural mind, it would therefore seem that deplorable living conditions, starvation, and depravity provide the greater testing ground for a man’s loyalty toward God. However, most Christians who survive that kind of testing start thinking they have enough character to survive anything.

Then if their circumstances change for the better and the limitations of the flesh are removed, they fall prey to an even greater realm of testings and trials as their loyalty is put on trial by prosperity.

This, then, is the dilemma the Church at large faces: The Christians of third-world countries who, to all appearances, possess a steadfast loyalty and zeal for God cannot evangelize the world because they have no money. But if God blesses them with a great increase in finances, many of these seemingly sold-out Christians become like most of us in the United States. They often fail the loyalty test and begin to act and sound just like those of us who have been neutralized through the love of money.

Therein lies the problem. The people who appear to be much more spiritual and loyal to God cannot be used by Him because they don't have any money. On the other hand, the people who do not appear to be as spiritual cannot be used by God because they have been neutralized by the money they possess!

Chapter 3

The Carnal Nature Of Our Flesh

The heads of most large ministries will tell you that their ministries are primarily supported by people who give donations of five to twenty-five dollars.

Personally, I have always wondered where the larger contributors hide! I know there are always some wealthy believers who give generously, but where are the majority who know about giving and about establishing partnerships with ministries in order to reach the lost — yet they do not give?

I can tell you what has happened to many of these wealthy believers. Most of them no longer pursue the goal of winning lost souls for the Kingdom of God with the same tenacity they once did before their loyalty was neutralized by the love of money. Most of them give little or nothing, depending on how deeply their security or comfort is being threatened.

Throughout the history of mankind, ever since Satan introduced greed and lack into this world, money has been a major problem for people. The devil has always been successful in getting men to heap up treasure unto themselves.

Too often believers don't understand that the real fight for prosperity is not against poverty, but against the self nature that takes their loyalty away from God. When

their choices are not between hardships and God but between the pleasures of the good life and God, very few prevail over the love of money before the love of money prevails over them.

God's Search For the Trustworthy

As incredible as it may seem, God has chosen to depend on human beings to preach the Gospel. This is why Romans 10:14 says, **How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?**

God depends on frail human beings to carry the greatest message on earth to those who are lost and headed for hell. Yet just as He afforded Adam the right to make his own decisions, God gives believers that same right — to decide not only whether or not they will serve Him, but even the degree to which they will do so.

It is mind-boggling to think that God has entrusted His evangelistic efforts into the hands of people like you and me. It is even more frightening when you understand that, in order to finance the Gospel, God has to get His wealth past the carnal nature of believers and into the hands of those who are winning souls!

It therefore doesn't take much to realize that a person God can trust to make wealthy (and I'm talking about **INCREDIBLY** wealthy!) for the sake of His Kingdom is a rare commodity. Yet God is continually looking for that type of person.

The Real Problem

So the problem is not money or the lack of money, but whether or not you are willing to deal with the carnal nature of the flesh.

The only way lack can be your problem is when you **BELIEVE** it is the problem. If that is what you believe, consider this: If lack were the problem, why did Jesus say four different times in Matthew 6 not to take any thought for your life — for what you will eat, drink, or wear?

**Therefore I say unto you,
Take no thought for your life,
what ye shall eat, or what ye
shall drink; nor yet for your
body, what ye shall put on. Is
not the life more than meat, and
the body than raiment?**

Matthew 6:25

**And why take ye thought for
raiment? Consider the lilies of
the field, how they grow; they
toil not, neither do they spin.**

Matthew 6:28

**Therefore take no thought,
saying, What shall we eat? or,
What shall we drink? or,
Wherewithal shall we be
clothed?**

Matthew 6:31

**Take therefore no thought
for the morrow: for the morrow
shall take thought for the things
of itself. Sufficient unto the day
is the evil thereof.**

Matthew 6:34

No, lack isn't the problem. Wealth is more of a problem to a man's loyalty to God than lack is. Yet of all the truths God has taught me, this is one of the most important: The singularly most effective action a

person can take in the spirit to combat the flesh in both these areas is **WORSHIP.**

When we first enter into private, consistent worship of God, Satan accuses us of false motives. He tells our minds that we are worshiping God and giving of our finances only for the selfish motive of receiving something back in return. **BUT WE MUST NOT STOP WORSHIPING!**

The devil knows that if he cannot convince us to quit through condemning thoughts, we will eventually break the bonds of flesh that constrain us. Once we taste God's goodness through true worship, the enemy will be hard pressed to convince us to go back to serving the flesh instead of pursuing a deeper relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Chapter 4

The Power of Worship

Do you really want to prosper in God? I'm talking about prospering in the nature and the grace of God to the extent that God is always free to meet your needs and you are always available when He moves on you to meet other people's needs. If this is your heart desire, you must learn how to defeat Satan in the areas he is most effective — the emotional realms of the soul. **That's why Third John 2 says, Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, EVEN AS THY SOUL PROSPERETH.**

When I talk about emotions, I am not just referring to the kinds of emotions that keep a man poor, such as the worries, torments, and fears that Jesus warned us of in Matthew 6. I am also talking about the kinds of emotions that neutralize a man's loyalty even after he has prospered, such as greed, lust, selfishness, and self-indulgence.

So how do you defeat the enemy in this soulish realm of the emotions? There is nothing like worship to meet the flesh head-on and effect the kind of change that constitutes the prosperity of the soul.

In fact, if you will heed what I'm telling you here, you will not only prosper in this world, but one day when you stand before God, you will be free of the guilt and the blood of men because you chose not to turn your back on lost humanity. Instead, you chose to use your treasure, your faith, and your life to help people find

hope and new life in Christ.

What Is a 'Cheerful Giver'?

All of us have a battle to fight to keep from being consumed not only with the cares of this life but with the subtle pull of riches. Satan can use either one of these temptations to stop the flow of God's riches through the Body of Christ for the evangelism of lost souls.

Second Corinthians 9:7 says, **Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.** When Paul said we are not to give grudgingly, he was talking about an attitude that can develop toward God when we feel forced into giving. That feeling of being forced causes us to give grudgingly — not out of a heart of compassion, but because we are afraid of the consequences if we do not.

Paul also said we are to give "not out of necessity." In other words, we are not to give only because we feel compelled when presented with overwhelming needs.

Even though God appreciates His people's giving when they are motivated to do so out of necessity, His favorite kind of giver is a cheerful giver. A cheerful giver doesn't give in order to get rich. He doesn't give grudgingly because he is afraid of the consequences, nor does he give only out of necessity when moved by a pressing need. A cheerful giver is full of worship and appreciation for his relationship with God. He gives because he has fallen in love with God and needs no other motivation.

Worship Changes You

Personally, my life is being changed by worshiping God in my private prayer time. Something is happening to the carnal nature of my senses that is freeing me from bondage and releasing me more and more into the blessings of God. Today I am more thankful about a simple necktie or the clothes on my back than I used to be when I acquired a new car.

When I first went into my private prayer closet to worship God for His goodness and for meeting my needs, the devil tried to tell me I was only doing it for gain. But I didn't let the enemy discourage me. I stayed in there anyway and kept worshiping God.

You see, worship is very powerful. Even if your motives are wrong when you begin to worship God, they cannot possibly stay wrong because worshiping God in your private prayer closet brings transformation to your soul.

The moment you begin to worship God in your prayer closet — lifting your hands to Heaven and saying things like, “I love You, Father; thank You for supplying all my needs” — change begins in you. As you continue to tell God how much you love Him over and over again an hour at a time, you will be amazed at the change it will effect in you and in the adverse circumstances surrounding you.

Worship plays a most powerful role in cleansing the soul from worries, torments, and fears. Worship

also cleanses you from greed and self-indulgence so your soul can prosper.

So if you want to be set free from worry, torment, or fear — if you want to be free from poverty, lack, sickness, deception, and every other strategy of the devil — create a prayer closet or a private place where you can go to meet God. Then begin to worship Him for His Presence in your life, for His wonderful provision, and for His deliverance from every attack of the enemy.

Satan may come like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, but your God has placed you in the palm of His hand. And as you enter God's Presence often to love and worship Him, you open the way for Him to fulfill His heart desire — to cause you to prosper and be in health even as your soul prospers!

Worship:
The Key to Freedom

Have you been searching for a way to be set free from worry, fear, poverty, lack, and every other strategy of the devil? Author Dave Roberson provides you with the key to freedom in this little book. In *Worship Defeats Poverty*, Dave points the way to escape the bondage of the flesh and carnal emotions so you can live in the abundance that is yours in Christ!

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